

Identifying &
Responding to
Mental Health/
Wellbeing
Concerns During
COVID-19



**Mental
Health
Matters**

The stressful new reality...



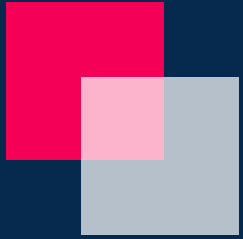
Gatis
Sluka

You have noticed changes in your child's behaviour but you feel frustrated. Remember...

“Until parents acknowledge our own annoyance, disappointment or other emotions around our current situation, it's difficult to see our children in a sympathetic light,” says Dr. Bela Sood, child and adolescent psychiatrist. “Recognizing our emotions – adults and kids alike – is the first step in addressing them and working to make the situation better.”

This will enable you to feel empathy for your child and their frustrations and struggles.

What types of changes in behaviour may you be seeing in your child?



COVID-19 and Teens a Rainbow of Emotions

As difficult as the changes are for adults, kids are dealing with their own feelings coupled with the emotions they pick up from their parents. As kids process what's going on in their lives, it's normal for the sadness they're feeling to come out in ways that may look very different. Here's a look at how some of these responses to sadness may appear:



Anger

Leave me alone!

Why are you always bugging me?

Don't you have something else to do?

This is my room. Knock before you enter.



Apathy

It doesn't matter anyway.

I'm just going to watch tv.

I don't want to do my school work.

I'm not joining in the family phone call.
I have nothing to say.



Boredom

There's nothing to do.

I don't feel like riding my bike.

I've already watched my Netflix shows.



Displaced frustration

Rrrrrrr, this is so annoying!

Why is the computer so slow?

I don't want a bagel. Why can't you ever make pancakes for breakfast?



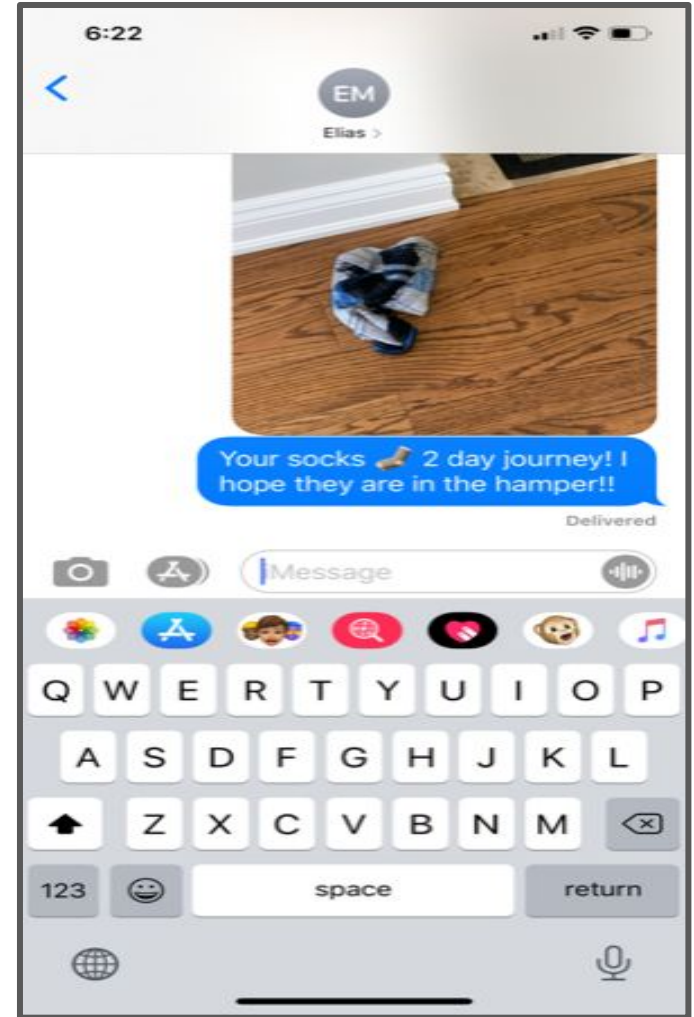
Resistance

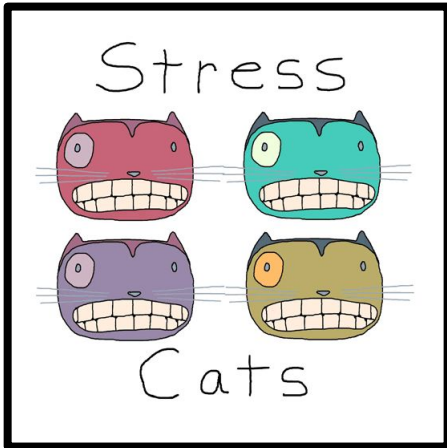
Why do I have to do this now?

I'm not reading for 30 minutes. Fine, I'll read one chapter and then I'm done.

You don't make me do all these chores any other time.

Teenage
Resistance-
Serenity Now!
Humour as an
antidote!





You may find yourself wondering is this typical teenage behaviour or stress as a result of COVID-19 or something altogether different. How do you know?



If the thought of talking to your child about their emotions makes you feel like this...





TIMING
IS EVERYTHING



Engage in dialogue
with your child.
Listen more, talk
less. This will help
you better
understand how they
are feeling.



Validate Your
Child's
Feelings- let
them know that
it is OK to feel
sad, frustrated
or unhappy.



Help your child accept that certain things are outside their realm of control so that they may move forward. This may mean helping your child identify:

- What is in their realm of control;
- Outside of their realm of control;
- What they feel when they are beginning to be in a negative space;
- Thoughts and behaviours that keep them stuck in a negative cycle;
- What to do when they feel overwhelmed i.e. going for a walk, listening to music, journalling, talking to a friend and;
- What they need from you when they are in a negative space.



**Help your child see that
sometimes we have tidal waves
of stress in our lives that result
in intense emotions and
thoughts. We need to learn to
ride these waves.**



Have your child think of a time that they were able to conquer tidal waves of stress. In what ways were they able to overcome such obstacles and emotions.



A few words about anxiety...

Good
Stress

Bad
Stress

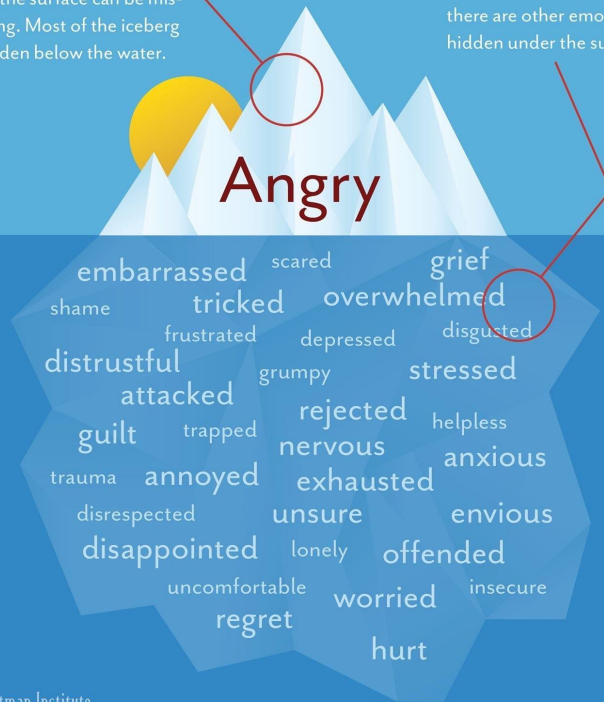
WHAT ANXIETY FEELS AND LOOKS LIKE

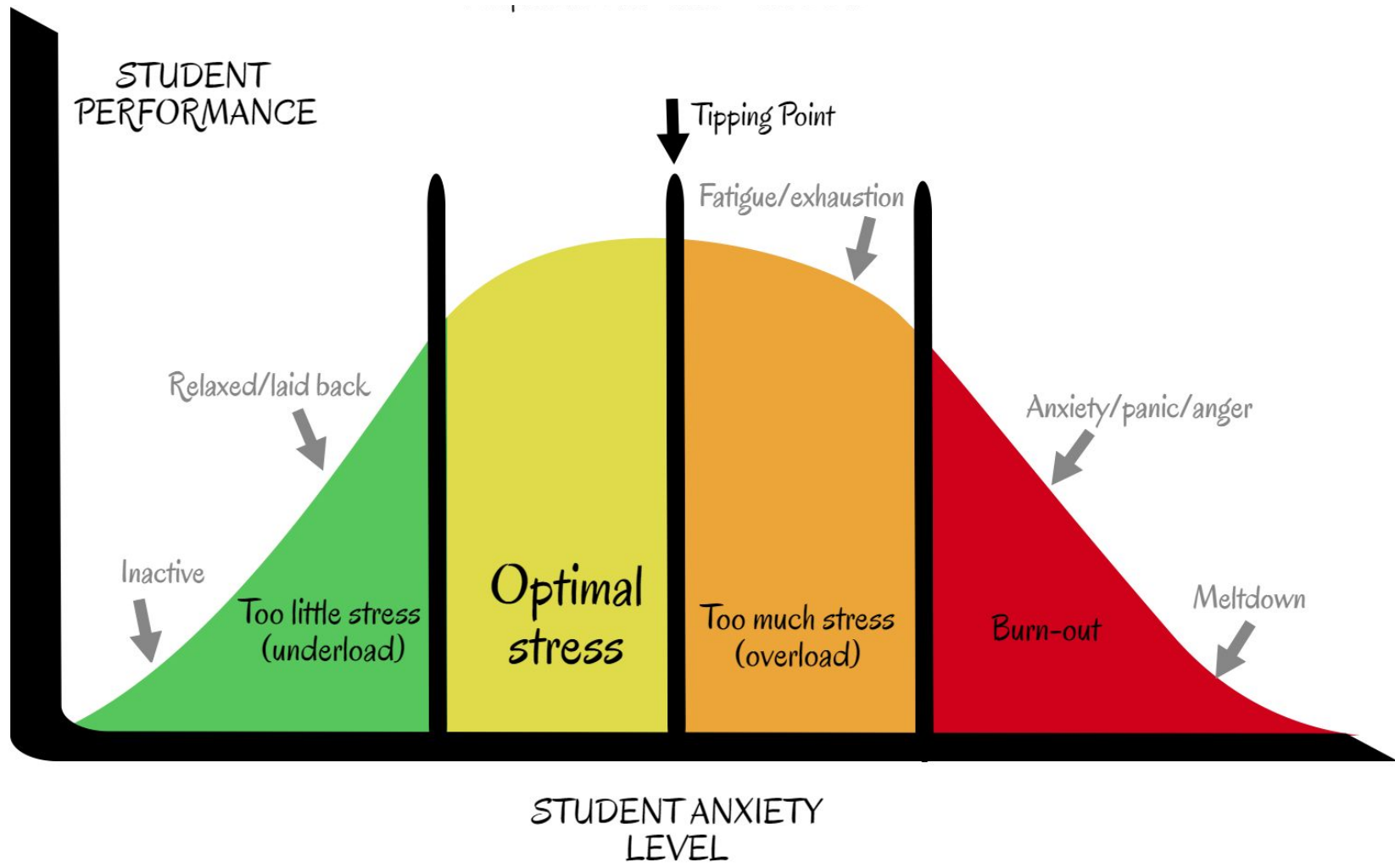


Anger Iceberg

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface.





When you have a
PROBLEM
you can choose to...

DO NOTHING
but expect more of the same

OR

WORK TO RESOLVE
the problem by ...

Addressing the issue

Reducing exposure

Creating boundaries

Changing your behaviour

OR

CHANGE YOUR
response to the problem



Example of exaggerated thinking: I am going to fail this test and my future is over!

This chart is an example of a thought record that can be used to challenge negative thoughts!

Emotions or feelings	Evidence that supports the thought	Evidence that does not supports the thought	Alternative and more realistic thought
I feel anxious. If I fail this test my parents will be mad and I will not get into the university of college of my choice.	I need 85% to be eligible.	This is only one test of many.	If I do poorly on this test, I will have to work harder. This test will not determine if I will succeed.
	Good marks are needed in order to be successful.	I'm doing well in other courses.	
		When I studied hard in the past I did well.	
		I may be able to do a makeup test.	
		My parents are more supportive when I ask for help.	

Catch

identify the thought that came before the emotion

Check

reflect on how accurate and useful the thought is

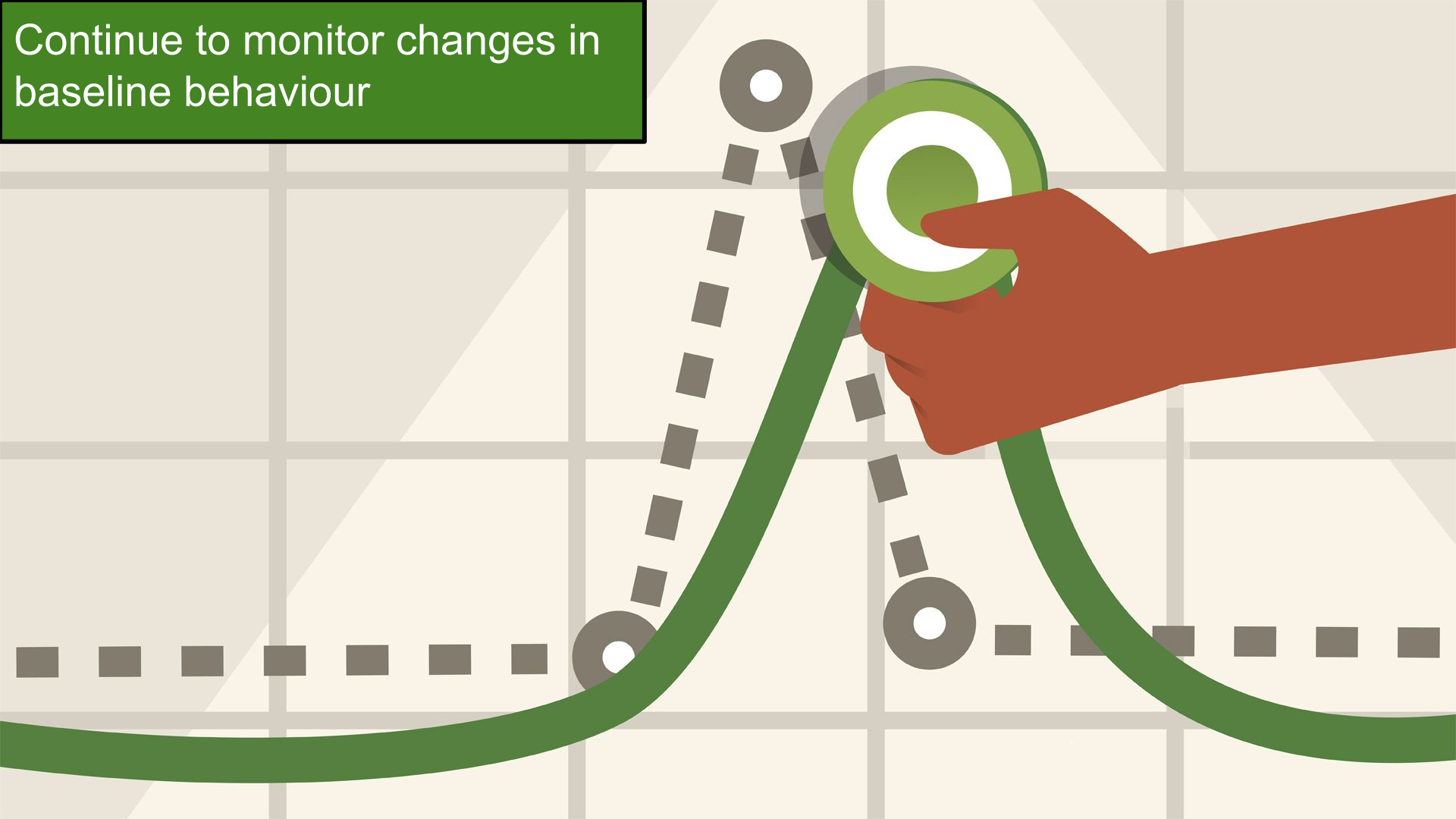
Change

Change the thought to a more realistic one

**Keep the
dialogue going...**



Continue to monitor changes in
baseline behaviour





Provide
Consistency,
Structure &
Predictability &
Routine

CHANGE
TAKES
TIME



BE
patient



LET'S



TALK



When should
you worry about
your child's
mental health...

Changes in your child's sleep patterns. Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or not feeling well-rested.



Changes in their energy level





Changes in task
completion

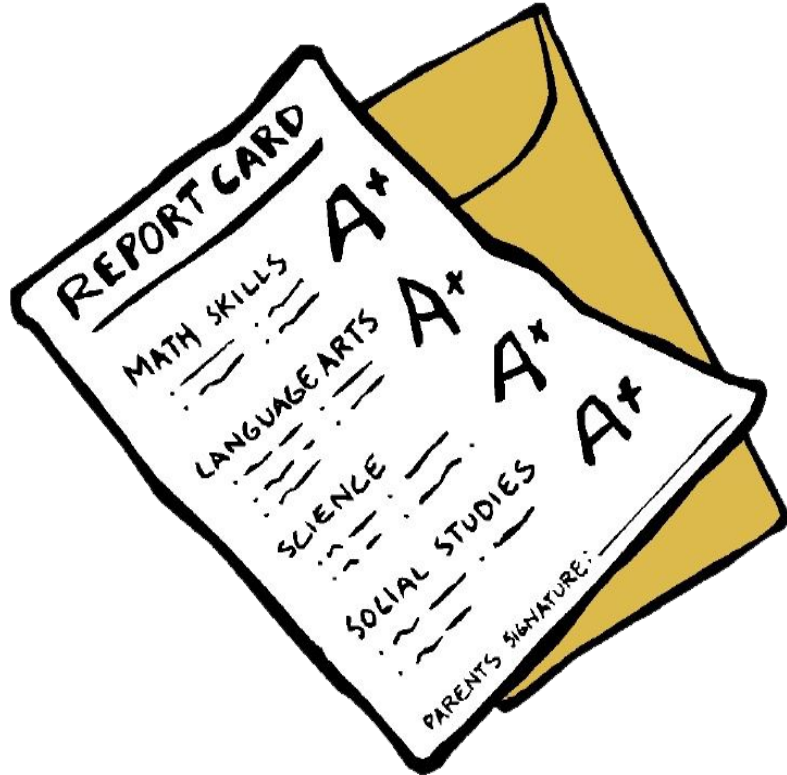
Changes
in your
child's
appetite



A background image of a sunset or sunrise over a body of water with mountains in the distance. The sky is a gradient of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is dark blue, and the mountains are silhouetted against the horizon.

Changes in your child's Motivation

Change in academic achievement



WHAT ANXIETY FEELS AND LOOKS LIKE



Persistent
Anxiety
Worrying,
Pessimism &
Irritability



Loss of interest in things that
once brought your child joy.

**If you have
concerns about
your child's
wellbeing talk to
your doctor.**



Always seek immediate help from a medical health professional if your child engages in unsafe behavior or talks about wanting to hurt him or herself or someone else.





**We're
here to
help!**



**What
questions
may you
have?**

